Five Point Programme for Agriculture Sector

1269. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have announced a five point programme to give impetus to agriculture and related activities in the country;

(b) if so, the main features of the said programme;

(c) whether Government propose to unveil scheme of information technology for its use in the agricultural sector; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The salient features of the five point programme announced by the Prime Minister during "Agro Advantage-Maharashtra Conference" on 6th November, 1998 included the following:

(a) Evolving Small Farmers agri-Business Consortium (SFAC) into a high level coordination body at the centre and in the States to promote corporate investments in agri business covering public sector, private sector, cooperatives etc.

(2) Strengthening of Forward Markets Commission to Promote forward deals in more commodities.

(3) Promoting joint ventures abroad to expand trade in farm produce.

(4) Unveiling a National Rural Cooperative Policy and enactment of the long pending Multi State Cooperative Act.

(5) Promotion of Information Technology in agriculture and agro business in a big way.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The details are as follows:

(1) Strengthening of information technology apparatus in the DAC HQ and setting up of National Agriculture Informatics Centre as also live network in respect of major crops from field to DAC Head Quarters.

(2) Centrally Sponsored Scheme to assist States in the field of Information Technology.

(3) Strengthening of field units of Department of Agriculture and Cooperation and their linkages and connectivity with the Head Quarters as also within the field units.

Suicide by Farmers

1270. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of farmers who have committed suicide in different States during 1998 (upto November 1998);

(b) whether Government have made any in-depth study to examine suicide by farmers;

(c) if so, the findings of such a study; and

(d) the details of steps taken to prevent suicide by farmers especially small and marginal farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Decline in Oilseed Production

1271. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that except for a significant rise in soyabean production in 1997-98 all other major oilseeds, particularly, groundnut and mustard have registered a sharp decline; and

(b) the plans of Government of check this decline?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) The production of major oilseeds in the country during 1996-97 and 1997-98 is given below:—